



Avon Books

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ELOISA on...
Being "Outed;"
A Knight in the Life;
Passions of Faith and Fiction

Eloisa on...Being "Outed":

Last year Eloisa James "came out," revealing to her friends and colleagues that she'd written nine bestselling novels behind their backs. She brought a box full of romances and a power point presentation into the English Department meeting at Fordham University. She visited the Dean of Faculty, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Dean of the Lincoln Center campus individually. She handed out loads of books to disgruntled friends and querulous relatives.

An academic peer (Julie Crawford, assistant professor of Early Modern Literature at Columbia University) noted, "It's pointless to ignore the power, the pleasure, and the craft employed in well-written romances, such as those of Eloisa James." Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Chair of Late Medieval Literature at the University of York, England, said in defense of Eloisa and the genre, "Romance-reading shouldn't be used by the academy as a way of reinforcing high-low culture distinctions in pursuit of its own institutional prestige. The sheer cultural weight of romance scripts and their presence in women's lives is what matters, and we can and should take all romances still more seriously than we do."

After Eloisa wrote an op-ed defending romance for *The New York Times*, she almost crashed the Fordham server as manuscripts flooded her in-box from all over the country. After Eloisa did an interview on NPR, she fielded questions in the hallways of the Shakespeare Association from Shakespeareans who'd know her for years and had no idea of her secret life...not to mention hearing from another Shakespearean with a pop culture career on the way.

Eloisa just had an academic article on 17th century drama accepted to arguably the most prestigious journal in English literary studies, the *PMLA*, or *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. She's the Director of Graduate Studies for Fordham University, and head of the 2009 honors class at the Lincoln Center campus.

How does she juggle two careers, and a family? What was the fall-out from her "coming out"? What are her academic colleagues saying, now they've read her sensual, hilarious novels and they know she's a *New York Times* bestseller?

Eloisa on...A Knight in the Life:

Believe it or not, Eloisa is a romance writer – married to an Italian knight! She met her *cavaliere* in a blind date in graduate school at Yale and married him soon after. He doesn't have a horse or a suit or armor, but he does have a family in Florence. Eloisa's life – as a *New York Times* bestselling author and Shakespeare professor – is fascinating, and people love to hear about it.

After years of going to Florence every summer, and frequently spending six months there at a time, she knows all the nooks and crannies of this lovely city. How much does this gorgeous medieval town influence her books? Is her own knight the model for any of her heroes?

Eloisa on...Passions of Faith and Fiction:

Eloisa's books shatter the stereotypes that plague romance writers and their genre. For instance, in her latest novel, *Kiss Me Annabel*, the hero is no rake: he's a near-virgin with a strong faith in God and a wish to save his soul. Questions of faith are often an important underpinning to this author's work: in 2004, she published a romance in which an Anglican preacher falls in love with a fallen woman – and that book landed solidly on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

As a scholar, Eloisa tells audiences that religion was part of the daily life of men and women in the 1800s...and any historical novel worth its salt can't ignore that. Industry watchers can relate that Inspirational romance is one of the fastest growing genres in popular fiction – but Eloisa's books, while written with a measure of faith, certainly don't adhere to the chaste boundaries of this emergent sub-genre.

Is there room in romance fiction for work that isn't inspirational, precisely – but doesn't avoid religion either?

Eloisa James lives in New York City...
why not meet her for a cup of tea and let one of these stories write
itself?